



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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National Evacuee Policy

This policy applies to evacuees from areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Those include counties in the Gulf Coast region in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The unprecedented damage from Hurricane Katrina has made it necessary for people to be evacuated, not only from the project area where they are living, but even from the entire State.

Evacuees in Nearby Disaster States: When a person is evacuated, or self-evacuates from the State where he/she was living when the disaster occurred to another State that is also authorized to operate a disaster program, the food stamp office for the area in which the person is now living may certify the person for food stamp benefits under that State's disaster provisions.

Evacuees in States That Have Not Been Authorized To Run a Disaster Program: When a person is evacuated, or self-evacuates, to a State that has not been authorized to run a disaster program, the State where the evacuee is now living may certify the person under expedited service rules. The eligibility worker in this case must:

- Treat the application as a priority;
- Verify that the evacuee was living in an area affected by Hurricane Katrina when the hurricane struck; and
- Check with the evacuee that he/she is not currently certified to receive food stamp benefits in that area, or any other area.

FNS will hold the State agency harmless from QC errors for such certifications.

Evacuees Who Are Currently Certified: When a person who is currently certified in an area affected by Hurricane Katrina visits a certification office in another State to ask about disaster benefits, the eligibility worker should take the following actions:

- Assure the person that he/she can use his/her current EBT card in local stores, and that he/she may continue to use food stamp benefits during his/her certification period; and
- Assist the evacuee in getting a new EBT card, if his/her current card has been lost or left behind in the area affected by Hurricane Katrina.

If the evacuee believes he/she will be residing in the local area permanently, or for the foreseeable future, the eligibility worker should offer to close the evacuee's current case in the disaster area, and take an application for a new certification in the local project area.

Attachment: List of Affected Areas

List of Areas Affected by Hurricane Katrina

Alabama

Baldwin, Clarke, Choctaw, Mobile, Sumter, and Washington Counties

Louisiana

The parishes of Acadia, Ascension, Assumption, Calcasieu, Cameron, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Pointe Coupee, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John, St. Mary, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana

Mississippi

Amite, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Stone, Walthall, and Wilkinson Counties

We are providing EBT contact numbers and contact numbers for obtaining information on a person's certification status for the affected areas separately.